



# REPORT TO THE PEOPLE



Highlights From  
the Los Angeles County  
District Attorney's Office

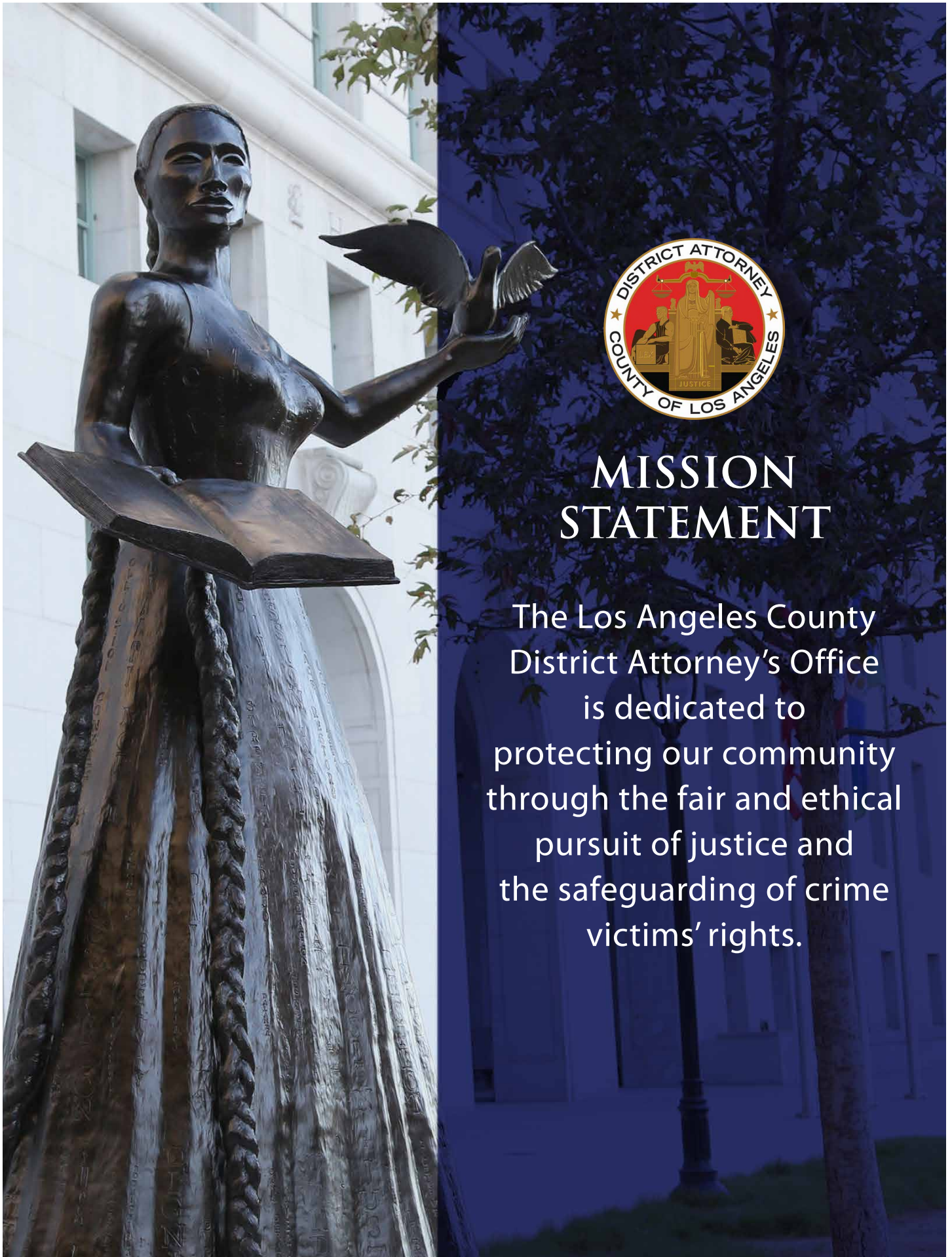
**2019-2020**

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Los Angeles County  
District Attorney's Office  
is dedicated to  
protecting our community  
through the fair and ethical  
pursuit of justice and  
the safeguarding of crime  
victims' rights.

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## A MESSAGE FROM DISTRICT ATTORNEY JACKIE LACEY

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It has been the honor of my life to serve the more than 10 million residents of Los Angeles County as District Attorney for the past eight years.

I'm equally proud to have been part of this great institution since 1986 when I was hired as a deputy district attorney. I have worked with some of the finest prosecutors, investigators, support staff members and, quite simply, the finest people you will ever meet.

This is my final Report to the People. In its pages we highlight many things we accomplished in the past two years, such as creating the Mental Health Division and meeting the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

I want this message to acknowledge some of the other accomplishments we've achieved throughout my tenure as District Attorney.

This seemingly short period in the county's history saw tremendous changes in the criminal justice system. Recreational cannabis was legalized, a new law allowed the resentencing of thousands of murder convicts and a voter-approved initiative opened up new parole opportunities for inmates.

We worked tirelessly to implement these changes with an eye toward public safety. I'm extraordinarily proud of the office's ability to adapt.

We led a groundbreaking effort to develop a comprehensive mental health diversion program. I founded and led the Criminal Justice Mental Health Advisory Board, which issued the report "A Blueprint for Change." The report set priorities that included adding community-based beds to house and treat individuals with mental illness. My office took on one of the report's top priorities and trained more than 2,000 first responders to interact safely and effectively with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.

Among the initiatives closest to my heart is our effort to safeguard seniors from fraud. As many of you know, my mother was targeted by such a scheme. I initiated our office's Fraud Alerts to educate the public about common fraud schemes, with a special focus on scams aimed at seniors.

We also started new programs to better prosecute and prevent child abuse, stop cybercrime, protect the environment, safeguard industrial workers and help victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of the more than 2,000 employees of the District Attorney's Office.

The people of this office understand its importance to the county, the nation and, in fact, the world. The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office remains a leader in fairly, appropriately and ethically prosecuting crimes, safeguarding victims, keeping the public safe and seeking justice.

Every day I've worked in this office, I've witnessed the serious commitment we have toward our duties and our ethical obligations. The people of this county expect nothing less of those of us who work for them.

I am here to tell you the employees of this office work to meet those expectations, and you have every reason to be proud of them.

Again, I thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve you.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jackie Lacey". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Los Angeles County District Attorney



# NEW DIVISION HELPS PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS



**B**olstering her efforts to help people living with mental illness in the criminal justice system, District Attorney Jackie Lacey established the Mental Health Division.

The division – the first of its kind in California and, possibly, the nation – brought together deputy district attorneys whose cases involved defendants declared incompetent to stand trial or who sought alternative sentences because of their mental health condition.

“Our goal is to protect the public and to assist people in getting the mental health and other services they need to be productive members of our community,” District Attorney Lacey said when announcing the division on Jan. 23, 2019. “We also want to make sure that jails and prisons are reserved for the most serious and violent offenders.”

The division expanded District Attorney Lacey’s innovative leadership in seeking a more just and effective criminal justice system for people living with mental illness.

Deputy district attorneys assigned to the division were tasked with guiding the office’s roughly 1,000 prosecutors to resolve cases involving those who commit offenses and whose untreated mental illness, historically, resulted in longer incarceration terms and mental deterioration.

They also helped deputy district attorneys who faced questions about potential diversion cases and court motions made under the pretrial mental health diversion law that was enacted in 2018.

An important internal policy component of this effort was District Attorney Lacey’s directive allowing deputy district attorneys to consider a defendant’s mental health when deciding if the individual should participate in a diversion program.

“With this policy, I am encouraging my lawyers to make courageous decisions and do the right thing,” District Attorney Lacey said. “We must make informed decisions to ensure public safety and help another human being in crisis.”

The District Attorney’s Office also sponsored a new law that made it easier for people under criminal justice supervision to receive mental health treatment.

Senate Bill 389, which was signed into law in 2019, allowed people who are subject to probation, parole, pre- and post-sentencing diversion and other forms of supervision to receive community-based treatment funded by the Mental Health Services Act.

“Members of our community whose mental illness has led them to the wrong side of the law will now have access to the treatment they need,” District Attorney Lacey said.

During her administration, which began in 2012, District Attorney Lacey started several initiatives to address the needs of people with mental illness, including providing free mental health awareness training to more than 2,000 law enforcement officers and other first responders.

# PUBLIC SAFETY, PUBLIC HEALTH: TOP PRIORITIES DURING PANDEMIC

As it did globally, the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to the District Attorney's Office and the entire criminal justice system.

Courtrooms were closed and trials were put on hold beginning in March 2020 as the public health crisis deepened. But, like in the past when the office faced emergencies, prosecutors continued to work to seek justice and protect the public.

"We have a constitutional duty to serve the public by keeping the residents of Los Angeles County safe from violent crime, even during national emergencies," District Attorney Jackie Lacey said.

Alternative work schedules for the office's 2,200 employees were adopted to reduce the number of individuals in an office at any one time. Deputy district attorneys used technology to work remotely, prepare for court hearings, interview witnesses and file criminal charges.

District Attorney Lacey directed her prosecutors to take steps to reduce the number of people both in local jails and courthouses as part of the office's response to help curb the spread of the coronavirus.

"The risk to public health has to be taken into consideration in every decision that we make," the District Attorney said.

Measures that were adopted included delaying the filing of new cases and re-evaluating pretrial cases that allowed nonviolent offenders who did not pose a danger to the community to remain outside the criminal justice system during the public health emergency.

District Attorney Lacey urged her prosecutors to examine pending cases and each defendant's criminal history to determine his or her risk to the community. That examination included the cases of more than 4,000 inmates in jail awaiting trial.

As a result, more than 1,000 defendants were released from custody, in an effort to reduce the spread of coronavirus within the jail.

Because of their painstaking efforts, deputy district attorneys were able to stop the release of defendants accused of murder, including convicted serial killer Michael Gargiulo, who would have posed a serious threat if released on zero bail.

The office also learned that some individuals were taking advantage of

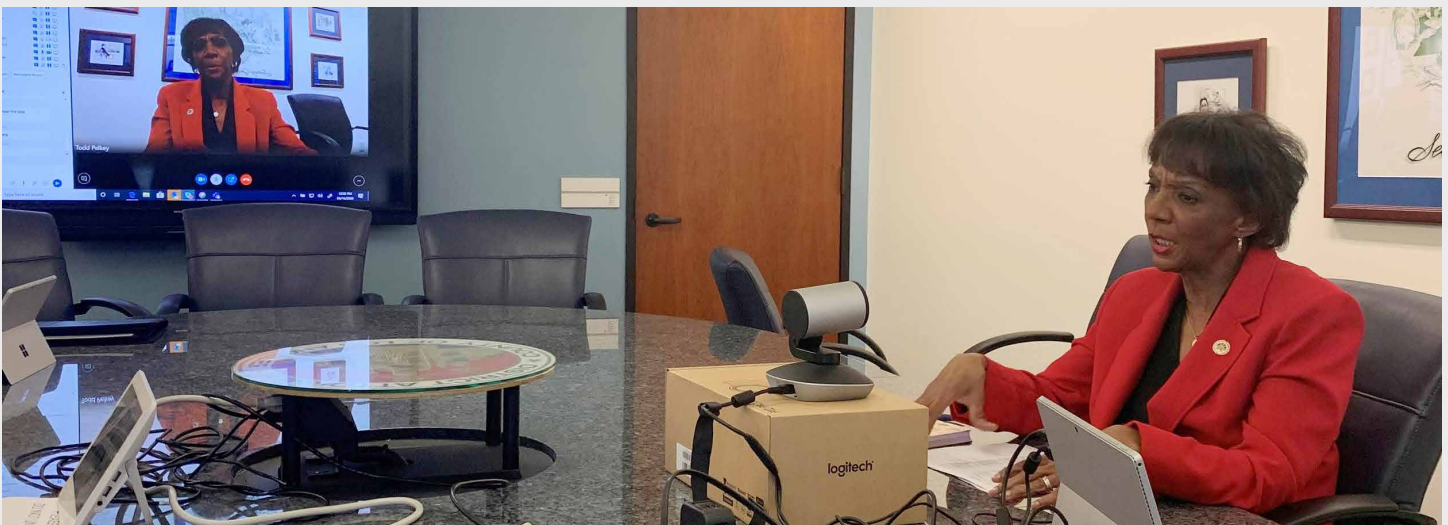
the public health crisis and continued to commit crimes after they were cited and released. District Attorney Lacey worked with court officials to create an exemption to zero bail for repeat offenders.

All the while, the office worked to protect crime victims by notifying them if their alleged perpetrators were set to be released. The office also offered victims services to help keep them safe.

In addition, the District Attorney's Office expanded its system that allowed detectives to present cases electronically for filing consideration.

Previously, a detective had to walk a case into an office for a deputy district attorney to review before criminal charges could be filed. That was time-consuming for law enforcement personnel, and, in the age of COVID-19, an unnecessary health risk.

Nearly 20% of all cases were submitted using the Electronic Charge Evaluation Request (eCER) program in September 2020, up from just 8% in January. A total of 26 police departments and 20 sheriff's stations used the electronic program to present cases for criminal case filing review.



*District Attorney Jackie Lacey discusses the continuation of operations during the pandemic with office managers in a March 2020 video conference.*

# COVID-RELATED SCAMS PROMPT CONSUMER WARNINGS



As the coronavirus pandemic gripped the world, District Attorney Jackie Lacey released a series of Fraud Alerts warning consumers about COVID-19-related scams that preyed on people's fears and tried to take advantage of the crisis.

The scams included the sale of fake remedies, theft of money or information by fraudsters promising the quick disbursement of federal stimulus checks and emails or text messages promoting information about the coronavirus that actually contained malware.

The Fraud Alerts gave consumers tips on how to avoid becoming a victim by learning how to spot such scams. The office began issuing Fraud Alerts in 2015.

District Attorney Lacey urged consumers to report price gouging to her office's Consumer Protection Division. Deputy district attorneys issued warnings to retailers regarding their pricing practices. They also took part in a multiagency task force to address consumer complaints and investigate possible criminal or civil law violations.

The office filed charges against a former pharmacy technician accused in the theft of \$6,700 worth of malaria-treatment tablets – which were once touted as a possible COVID-19 treatment – from a hospital. The defendant pleaded no contest in August 2020 to one felony count each of receiving stolen property exceeding \$950 and sale/offer to sell or transport a controlled substance.

## #BEHINDCLOSEDDOORS CAMPAIGN TARGETS ABUSE AT HOME

As the COVID-19 crisis commenced, District Attorney Jackie Lacey helped launch the #BehindClosedDoors public safety campaign, urging people to be alert and aware of crimes taking place at home.

The pandemic's stay-at-home public health order reduced person-to-person contact. That limited a victim's interaction with people most likely to identify and report abuse, like a teacher or hairdresser. It also kept people at home, restricting their ability to flee violent situations.

"We in law enforcement are especially concerned right now with protecting the people who live, work and visit Los Angeles County from domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse," District Attorney Lacey said at an April 24, 2020, news conference. "It's up to all of us to make sure that our

family, friends, neighbors and colleagues get through this public health emergency without becoming a victim of crime."

#BehindClosedDoors was a collaborative effort with Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer, the California Grocers Association and others.

The Grocers Association distributed posters to grocery stores with information about resources and services for abuse victims. The Los Angeles Unified School District's Grab & Go Food Centers also displayed this crucial information.

As part of that campaign, District Attorney Lacey released public service announcements asking people to report child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse.



## SUSPECT INDICTED IN RAPPER'S MURDER



A grand jury indicted a man on murder and attempted murder charges in connection with a 2019 shooting that left Nipsey Hussle dead and two others wounded.

Eric Ronald Holder Jr. was indicted less than two months after the shooting outside Hussle's South Los Angeles clothing store.

Holder faced one count of murder, two counts each of attempted murder and assault with a firearm and one count of firearm by a felon. The indictment also included

allegations that he personally used a handgun and caused great bodily injury and death.

Holder pleaded not guilty.

Deputy district attorneys alleged that on March 31, 2019, Holder fatally shot 33-year-old Hussle, born Ermias Asghedom, injured two others and fled the scene.

If convicted as charged, Holder faced a possible maximum sentence of life in state prison.

## REHAB CENTER OWNER SENTENCED FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT, FRAUD

The founder of a Los Angeles drug and alcohol treatment facility was sentenced to 52 years and eight months in state prison for sexually assaulting seven women over two years.

Christopher Bathum, who owned and operated Community Recovery of Los Angeles and other entities in Southern California and Colorado, also was sentenced to an additional 20 years in prison for his role in running a \$175-million fraudulent health care billing scheme.

In 2018, a jury convicted Bathum of 31 counts in the sexual assault case.

Between 2014 and 2016, Bathum preyed upon female patients by supplying them with drugs as they battled to

overcome their addictions, according to evidence presented at his trial. He then sexually assaulted them while they were under the influence.

Bathum later pleaded no contest in the fraud scheme to seven counts of grand theft, five counts of insurance fraud and one count each of identity theft and money laundering.

He and a codefendant obtained multiple health care insurance policies for their clients using their personal identifying information and falsified the clients' circumstances to obtain the policies. The patients were unaware that policies had been issued in their names.

In most instances, bills were sent for services that were never provided.



# RAPE CHARGES FILED AGAINST ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY FIGURES

**D**istrict Attorney Jackie Lacey's Entertainment Industry Sex Crimes Task Force filed sexual assault charges against film producer Harvey Weinstein and adult film actor Ronald Jeremy Hyatt for alleged crimes dating as far back as 1996.

The task force took part in the investigation of film producer David Guillo, who was charged in Santa Barbara County with sexually assaulting four women since 2012.

Rape charges also were filed against actor Daniel Masterson.

More than 40 cases were presented to the task force. Most of the alleged crimes were too old to prosecute or there was insufficient evidence to support the filing of criminal charges.

Weinstein was charged in January 2020 with allegedly raping one woman and sexually assaulting another in separate incidents over a two-day period in 2013. He later was charged with another sexual assault that allegedly took place in May 2010 in a Beverly Hills hotel room. In October 2020, more forcible sexual assault charges were added stemming from alleged incidents at Beverly Hills hotels involving a victim in 2004 or 2005 and

a victim in 2009 and 2010. Weinstein faced up to 140 years to life in state prison, if convicted as charged.

In 2020, Hyatt was charged with 11 counts of forcible rape and numerous other sexual assault charges in alleged incidents involving 23 victims from 1996 to January 2020. The actor, who used the stage name "Ron Jeremy," faced a maximum sentence of 330 years to life in state prison.

In June 2020, Guillo was charged with 11 felony counts, including rape of

an unconscious person. Three alleged assaults occurred in Los Angeles County, one in May 2012 and two in January 2015. He faced a maximum sentence of 21 years to life in state prison, if convicted on all counts.

Masterson was charged in June 2020 with forcibly raping three women between 2001 and 2003. If convicted as charged, he faced a sentence of 45 years to life in state prison.

All four defendants pleaded not guilty to the charges against them.



## EX-UNIVERSITY DOCTORS FACE SEXUAL ASSAULT CHARGES

Two doctors who worked as gynecologists at Los Angeles universities were separately charged by the District Attorney's Office with sexually assaulting patients.

George Tyndall, who worked at the University of Southern California, was accused of sexually assaulting 21 female students, who ranged in age from 17 to 31, at a campus health

center between 2009 and 2016. He pleaded not guilty to 35 felony counts.

James Mason Heaps, a former gynecologist-obstetrician at the University of California, Los Angeles, was charged with sexually assaulting seven patients between 2011 and 2018. He pleaded not guilty to 20 felony counts.

Tyndall faced a maximum sentence of 64 years in state prison, and Heaps faced a maximum of 67 years in state prison, if convicted.

After charges were filed, Tyndall surrendered his medical license. Heaps' medical license was suspended by a judge for the duration of his criminal case.

# GENETIC GENEALOGY LEADS TO COLD CASE MURDER CHARGES

The office's first murder case using genetic genealogy was filed against a Northern California man accused of killing two young women in the 1980s.

"Thanks to advances in technology and forensics, we are now able to virtually reach back in time and find those responsible for these vicious crimes," District Attorney Jackie Lacey said during a Nov. 15, 2019, news conference.

In this case, time was on law enforcement's side.

In 2006, using the most advanced DNA technology at the time, the Burbank Police Department was able to link the forensic evidence from the 1986 killing of 22-year-old Mary Duggan to another cold case murder in neighboring San Bernardino County.

Police knew that Duggan was killed by the same man who had killed Selena Keough in Montclair six years earlier. But, at that time, DNA did not identify the suspect.

When District Attorney Lacey established the Cold Case Unit within

her Major Crimes Division, these were the types of cases she hoped to prosecute, helping to bring peace of mind to the families of homicide victims.

"With dedicated resources and rapidly advancing technology," she said, "we can unmask the cowardly murderers who have remained hidden in our community and bring justice to the grief-stricken families who have waited too long for answers."

Deputy district attorneys assigned to the Cold Case Unit worked with law enforcement, using genetic genealogy, to identify Horace Van Vaultz Jr. as the suspected serial killer.

Vaultz was charged with two counts of murder with multiple special circumstance allegations. He faced the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole, if convicted as charged.

***"With dedicated resources and rapidly advancing technology, we can unmask the cowardly murderers who have remained hidden in our community and bring justice to the grief-stricken families who have waited too long for answers." - District Attorney Jackie Lacey***

## REVIEW LEADS TO EXONERATION, ATTEMPTED MURDER CONVICTIONS

When an innocent man was exonerated after serving 20 years in prison for a crime he did not commit, deputy district attorneys brought the real culprits to justice.

"The work of my Conviction Review Unit does not stop when a wrongfully convicted person is freed from prison," District Attorney Jackie Lacey said on Jan. 8, 2020. "We continue to seek justice on behalf of victims by reinvestigating the crime and prosecuting the real criminals who, in this case, may have thought they got away with attempted murder."

When new evidence affirmed that Marco Contreras was innocent, deputy district attorneys turned their efforts to solving the attempted murder case for which he had been wrongfully convicted.

Contreras was exonerated on March 23, 2017.

On that day, Contreras was released from state prison and deputy district attorneys in the office's Hardcore Gang Division filed criminal charges against two men who later were convicted for that same crime.

Contreras' conviction review uncovered key evidence that led to their arrests in the 1996 shooting of an alleged drug-dealing rival in Compton.

In January 2020, Antonio Salgado and Antonio Garcia were sentenced to state prison after being found guilty by a Compton jury of attempted murder and conspiracy to commit murder. Salgado was sentenced to 60 years to life in state prison and Garcia was sentenced to 25 years to life.



# TWO MEN EXONERATED BY CONVICTION REVIEW UNIT



*Left:*  
District Attorney Jackie Lacey and Ruben Martinez Jr. embrace. Martinez was exonerated after being wrongfully convicted of a series of robberies.

*Below:*  
District Attorney Lacey meets with Derrick Harris and his son. Harris was exonerated after being wrongfully convicted of robbery, illegally possessing a firearm and violating a gang injunction.

The case of Ruben Martinez Jr. marked the first time an inmate who was not represented by an attorney was exonerated using the conviction review process established by District Attorney Jackie Lacey in 2015. Martinez was the third person cleared by the unit.

"This case is a powerful example of why we need dedicated conviction review units," District Attorney Lacey said at a Nov. 12, 2019, news conference.

Martinez was wrongfully convicted in 2008 for a series of armed robberies in Boyle Heights. He was sentenced to 47 years and eight months in state prison. Over the years, he had sought his freedom through a series of appeals, but those appeals were denied.

With nowhere left to turn, Martinez and his wife, Maria, filed a claim of actual innocence with the Conviction Review Unit. At the time of his release, his was one of more than 2,000 such claims filed with the unit.

Deputy district attorneys closely examined the evidence and found that his claim of innocence had merit. Then, district attorney investigators reopened the case.

They painstakingly tracked down his former coworkers and supervisors, even traveling out of state, and uncovered employment records and paystubs to confirm Martinez was at work at the time and could not have committed two of the robberies.

At District Attorney Lacey's request, a judge released Martinez from custody on Nov. 5, 2019, after he had served 11 years in prison, and later found him factually innocent of the crimes for which he was convicted.

"People do make mistakes," Martinez said. "But what touches me is when the D.A. got behind me ... and proved me innocent."

In October 2020, the Conviction Review Unit's work led to a fourth conviction being vacated and Derrick Harris of Los Angeles was released. He was wrongfully convicted in 2013 of robbery, illegally possessing a firearm and violating a gang injunction.



# VAPE BRAND SUED FOR TARGETING MINORS

District Attorney Jackie Lacey joined California Attorney General Xavier Becerra in suing the nation's largest vape brand for allegedly targeting young people and failing to give warnings about health risks posed by using e-cigarettes with nicotine.

District Attorney Lacey noted that tobacco use had increased among young people and was driven by vape products.

"We believe JUUL Labs, in particular, has defied the law through the systemic sale of its products containing tobacco and nicotine to underage youth," District Attorney Lacey said at a Nov. 18, 2019, news conference.

"JUUL and other nicotine product makers must be held accountable when they knowingly fail to take the necessary protective measures and allow the sale of nicotine products to underage buyers," she added.

The JUUL lawsuit alleged that the company violated state law by failing to check the names and birthdates of online purchasers, shipping products to fake addresses and post office boxes and violating minors' privacy rights.

## Lawsuit Allegations Against JUUL:

- Failed to include warnings about exposure to chemicals linked to cancer and birth defects
- Delivered tobacco products directly to underage persons
- Delivered tobacco products directly without properly verifying the age of consumers
- Violated minors' privacy rights by sending marketing material to minors' email addresses
- Created a public health epidemic with an addictive and harmful product

The company was accused of regularly shipping products to fake addresses or post office boxes. It also allegedly sent vaping devices and pods containing nicotine to teens who had made fake warranty claims for replacement products.

The lawsuit demanded that JUUL pay for the prevention of underage tobacco use and the costs of treating underage addiction. It also asked a judge to require the company to change its business practices to prevent the sale of vape products to underage buyers in the future.

# CONSUMER FRAUD SUMMIT AIMS TO STOP SCAMS

Anyone can become a victim of fraud.

That was the message from the District Attorney's Consumer Fraud Summit, which took place on March 7, 2019.

District Attorney Jackie Lacey recounted how even her mother was scammed several years ago. That experience led District Attorney Lacey to increase public awareness, especially among seniors, to recognize and prevent these often-devastating financial frauds.

"We in the District Attorney's Office are committed to prosecuting these crimes and making sure that perpetrators are held accountable," District Attorney Lacey said. "But in reality, these scams will continue as long as there are victims to be had. We all know the key to stopping fraud is education."

More than 200 prosecutors, law enforcement personnel, local government officials, community advocates and business leaders came together to discuss ways they could work together to protect consumers from devastating financial losses due to criminal activity.



Panels of experts, led by deputy district attorneys from the office's Consumer Protection Division, discussed topics including immigration fraud and cyber privacy and security.

They explained a range of scams – from enduring cons like those involving vehicle odometer rollbacks to new forms of cyber intrusion and identity theft – and how to avoid them.



# \$18.8 MILLION SETTLEMENT REACHED AGAINST CABLE COMPANY

**M**ore than 170,000 consumers throughout California received at least \$90 each in credit from Time Warner Cable, LLC as part of a historic \$18.8 million settlement reached by the District Attorney's Office.

It was the largest direct restitution order ever secured by the office in a consumer protection case.

"This historic settlement serves as a warning to all companies in California that deceptive practices are bad for consumers and bad for business," District Attorney Jackie Lacey said at a Feb. 20, 2020, news conference. "We as prosecutors demand that all service providers – large and small – live up to their claims and fairly market their products."

Under the settlement, \$16.9 million in restitution was returned to consumers through credits applied to their cable/internet bills from Spectrum, the parent

## \$16.9 million

Total Restitution Paid to  
Time Warner Cable Customers

## 170,000

Affected Customers in  
Los Angeles, Riverside and San Diego Counties

## \$90

Amount of Credit Given on the Bills of  
Most Affected Cable Customers

## \$180

Amount of Credit Given on the Bills of  
High-Speed Internet Service Customers

## \$1.9 million

Amount Time Warner Cable Paid for  
Investigation and Prosecution Costs

company of Time Warner Cable. The company also agreed to pay \$1.9 million to cover costs associated with the investigation and prosecution of this and future consumer protection cases.

Time Warner Cable was accused of using misleading advertising practices to lure consumers to pay for high-speed internet services the company could not deliver, beginning in 2013.

As part of the settlement, the company agreed to a ban on advertising internet speeds it knows or should know it cannot consistently deliver during peak hours. It also was required to ensure its customers were issued equipment that actually could deliver at the advertised speeds.

The lawsuit was filed by the District Attorneys of Los Angeles, San Diego and Riverside counties in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

## MOTEL AGREES TO CURB SEX TRAFFICKING AFTER NUISANCE LAWSUIT

A Pomona motel agreed to curtail prostitution and human trafficking on its premises after it reached a settlement in a lawsuit filed by the District Attorney's Office.

This was the first time the office used California consumer protection laws to confront human sex trafficking in Los Angeles County.

"This settlement makes it more difficult for human traffickers to conduct their illegal enterprises in Los Angeles County," District Attorney Jackie Lacey announced on Sept. 4, 2020.

"It also serves as a warning to property owners that as we shut

down human trafficking operations, we will hold accountable the people who silently gave refuge to these criminals, disregarding their victims and benefiting financially from these crimes," she added.

In the lawsuit, the District Attorney's Office alleged that Pomona Lodge Inc., was a public nuisance, violated California's Red Light Abatement Law and engaged in unlawful business practices.

Under the settlement, the motel's owner was required to install security cameras at the motel, stop renting rooms by the hour and post the human trafficking awareness notice, as required by law.

The owner also was ordered to pay \$9,000 in civil penalties and investigative costs.

The lawsuit stemmed from an undercover investigation by district attorney investigators. Pomona police had received numerous complaints about illicit activity at the motel.

In addition, Ravirajsihn Zala, a desk clerk at the motel, was charged in connection with the investigation. He was accused of renting rooms to sex workers and demanding a portion of their earnings. He pleaded no contest on Nov. 4, 2020, to one count of human trafficking of a minor for a commercial sex act.

# REPORTING ILLEGAL OPIOID USE SAVES LIVES

**D**istrict Attorney Jackie Lacey asked members of the public to report the illegal trafficking or overprescription of opioids to her office for possible criminal prosecution.

"We must do everything in our power to stop the flow of these deadly drugs into our community, whether they are bought illegally on the streets or legally with a valid prescription," District Attorney Lacey said during a May 7, 2019, news conference. "Reporting this crime will help us save lives."

In Los Angeles County, 497 people died from opioid-related overdoses in 2018, the California Department of Public Health reported. That was a 41% increase from 2016.

District Attorney Lacey said getting the public's help could make a lasting, meaningful difference in the lives of those who struggle with opioid addiction.

The District Attorney's Office aggressively prosecuted manufacturers and sellers of illegal narcotics and those who unlawfully prescribe controlled substances.



**Opioid Trafficking and Overprescribing Complaint Form**  
Mail to: Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office  
Bureau of Investigation  
211 West Temple Street, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Your Information** (Section 1)  
Name (Last, First, Middle):  
Address (Number, Street, City, State, ZIP Code):  
Phone (Home): Phone (Business): Phone (Alternate):  
Email Address:

**Complaint Filed Against** (Section 2)  
Name of Individual or Company:  
Business Address (Number, Street, City, State, ZIP Code):  
Phone (Business): Phone (Alternate):  
Email Address:  
Website Address:

**Summary of Complaint** (Section 3)  
Please list what happened, where it happened, who is responsible and any potential witnesses. Attach copies of all relevant documents, photographs, prescriptions and any other pertinent information. **Please retain all original documentary evidence for your records.**



## PRISON CRIMES SECTION ESTABLISHED

District Attorney Jackie Lacey established a new unit dedicated to prosecuting crimes committed behind bars in an effort to make sure that victims – be they prison visitors, employees or other inmates – get the justice they deserve.

The goal of the Prison Crimes Section was to ensure that inmates were held accountable for the criminal acts they committed while in custody.

This was deemed especially important as new laws allowed more inmates to be considered for parole and return to their communities.

In the first year after it was established in February 2019, the section reviewed more than 450 cases for filing and was

prosecuting 190 cases committed in California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) facilities in Los Angeles County. The offenses included narcotics possession, sexual assault and a multi-defendant, gang-murder conspiracy.

District Attorney Lacey said filing charges against inmates, even those already serving life sentences, is important for the parole review process. Parole decisions take into account an inmate's behavior while incarcerated.

Such conduct could indicate that the inmates may still be a danger to the community. It also could harm the rehabilitation efforts of other prisoners.



# TENS OF THOUSANDS OF CANNABIS CONVICTIONS DISMISSED



**D**istrict Attorney Jackie Lacey asked the court to dismiss nearly 66,000 cannabis-related convictions in Los Angeles County after California voters legalized the use of cannabis.

“The dismissal of tens of thousands of old cannabis-related convictions in Los Angeles County will bring much-needed relief to communities of color that disproportionately suffered the unjust consequences of our nation’s drug laws,” District Attorney Lacey said during a Feb. 13, 2020, news conference.

“I am privileged to be part of a system dedicated to finding innovative solutions and implementing meaningful criminal justice reform that gives all people the support they need to build the life they deserve,” she said.

The dismissals were spurred by voter-approved Proposition 64, which not only legalized certain cannabis activities for adults but also directed prosecutors to review and reduce felony convictions for the cultivation, sales, transport and possession for sale of cannabis to misdemeanors, and dismiss misdemeanor possession of marijuana convictions.

Rather than just reduce the convictions, as required by law, District Attorney Lacey asked the court to dismiss all eligible cannabis-related convictions. She also expanded the dismissal criteria to include people who were 50 years

or older, hadn’t had a felony conviction in 10 years or had successfully completed probation for cannabis convictions.

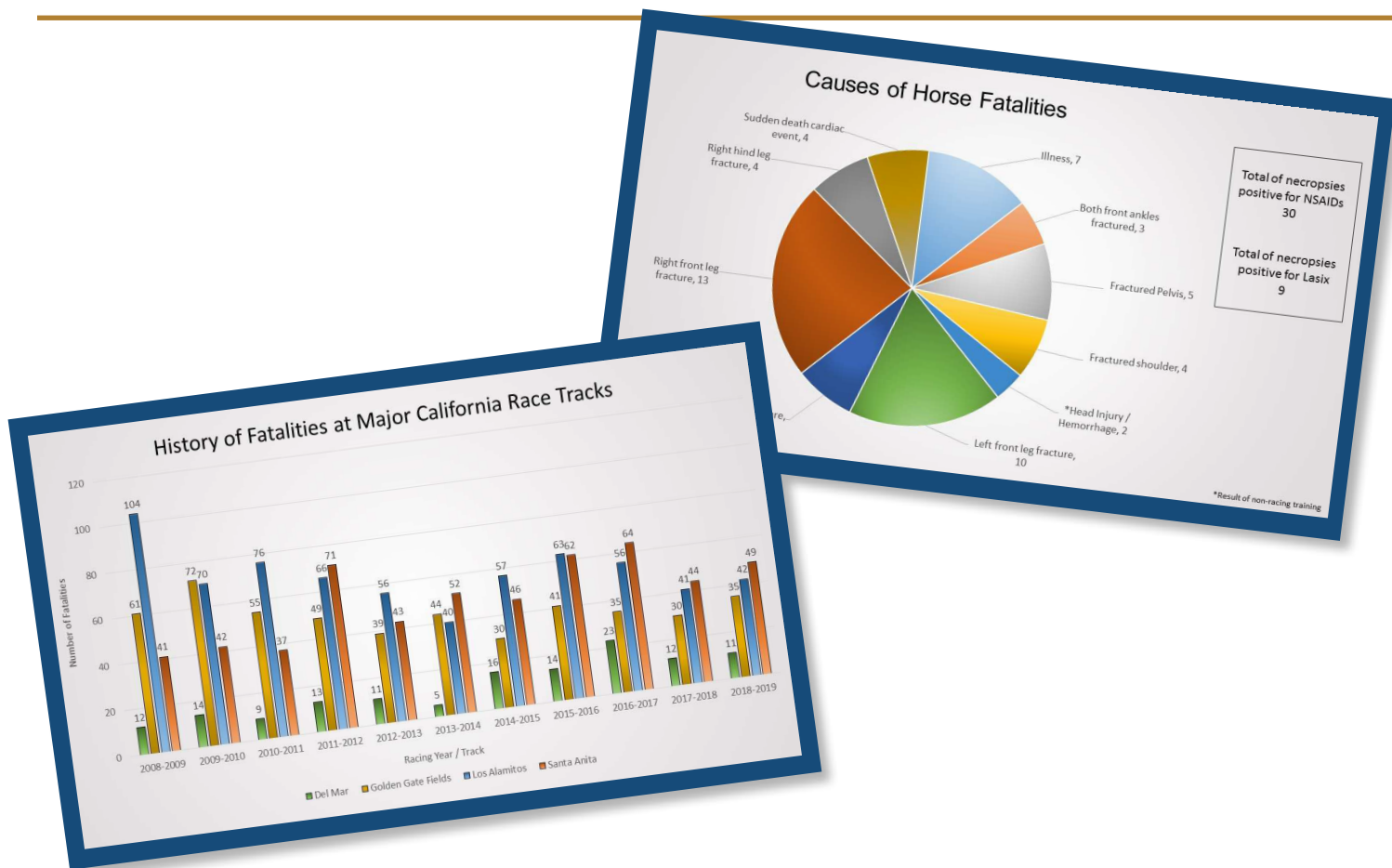
It was believed to be the largest effort in California to remove old criminal convictions in a single court motion. Besides the sheer volume, the office sought to dismiss cases going back to 1961, long before these records and case files were automated.

Eligible cases were identified using a custom algorithm created by Code for America, a nonprofit technology group. The cutting-edge collaboration saved taxpayer dollars by reducing the time and resources otherwise needed to implement the new state law.

## Past Convictions Dismissed:

- Cultivation of cannabis
- Possession for sale of cannabis
- Sale and/or transport of cannabis
- Possession of cannabis
- Any person 50 or older
- Anyone with no felony conviction in the previous 10 years
- Any person who successfully completed probation

# TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS HORSE RACING SAFETY MEASURES



District Attorney Jackie Lacey created a task force on racehorse deaths that called for new safety measures to protect horses and their riders.

The District Attorney formed the task force after numerous horse deaths occurred at Santa Anita Park. The panel issued a report that offered recommended best practices aimed at reducing horse fatalities at Santa Anita Park and other racetracks in California.

"Horse racing has inherent risks but is a legally sanctioned sport in California," District Attorney Lacey said when the report was released on Dec. 19, 2019. "Greater precautions are needed to enhance safety and protect both horses and their riders."

The task force reviewed evidence to determine whether unlawful conduct or conditions affected the welfare and safety of horses at Santa Anita Park.

"After a thorough investigation and review of the evidence, the District Attorney's Task Force did not find evidence of criminal animal cruelty or unlawful conduct relating to the equine fatalities at Santa Anita Park," the report stated.

The report called for the California horse racing industry and regulators to work together and create a strategic safety plan aimed at reducing horse deaths.

Recommendations also included enhancing penalties for violations of California Horse Racing Board rules, urging the board to prepare an annual racing fatality report and establishing a tip line to encourage the reporting of suspected animal cruelty, horses at risk or illegal practices.

District Attorney Lacey sponsored legislation that required a horse's medical records be provided to all those responsible for the animal's safety. She also supported a new law that gave racing authorities the power to suspend a horse race meet for health and safety reasons. Both bills were signed into law.

Just months after the District Attorney's Office issued its racetrack safety recommendations, Santa Anita Park ended its 2020 autumn meet with no horse racing or training fatalities.

# WIDER USE OF PRE-FILING DIVERSION PUSHED

With the COVID-19 pandemic affecting Los Angeles County courts and jails, District Attorney Jackie Lacey directed prosecutors to expand the use of an office program designed to keep individuals accused of misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies out of courthouses.

The Pre-Filing Diversion Program allowed individuals to avoid criminal charges if they completed counseling and treatment programs addressing their criminal behavior. Its goal was to lower recidivism rates through rehabilitative services rather than incarceration.

More than 5,800 people completed the program since it began in July 2017. By keeping these cases out of court, the program saved taxpayers an estimated \$30 million.

“Individuals get a chance to alter their path in life,” District Attorney Lacey said. “If they successfully complete the program, they will avoid criminal charges that could hinder their future as productive members of society.”

Deputy district attorneys selected the cases that were moved out of the courts and into the program, where cases were handled by hearing officers from the District Attorney’s Office.

Participants might be required to take part in office-approved treatment and counseling programs. They also could be required to perform community service, comply with stay-away conditions from victims and pay restitution.

More than \$156,000 in restitution was paid by Pre-Filing Diversion Program participants to crime victims since the program started.

Those who failed to complete the program faced charges based on their original alleged offenses.



## ALTERNATIVES TO CASH BAIL SUPPORTED

District Attorney Jackie Lacey’s pursuit of an effective alternative to cash bail led to the launch of a pilot program that used innovative risk assessment tools to determine whether a defendant could be safely released from custody and was likely to return to court.

She established the Bail Reform Working Group within her office to help develop pretrial release procedures to serve as alternatives to cash bail in Los Angeles County.

“I am a strong proponent of bail reform,” District Attorney Lacey said. “My working group helped create a process that levels the playing field for people who cannot afford to post bail while also maintaining public safety and safeguarding victims’ rights.”

In March 2020, static risk assessments of all people arrested and booked for criminal conduct began countywide.

This assessment used data obtained from a number of sources as well as the charges for which the person was arrested to determine whether in-custody defendants could be safely released back in the community while they awaited trial.

In June 2020, the second phase of the Pretrial Release Evaluation Pilot was launched at the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center in downtown Los Angeles. It employs a dynamic risk assessment tool, which included an interview with the defendant.

“It is my hope these new programs will protect public safety and eliminate some of the consequences that prolonged detention causes like loss of employment, harm to dependent family members and exposure to crime that occurs in custody,” District Attorney Lacey said.



# EFFORTS TO INCREASE DIVERSITY BOLSTERED BY OFFICE

District Attorney Jackie Lacey renewed efforts to recruit top law school prospects and ensure that her office reflected the diversity of Los Angeles County.

She established the Recruitment Unit to develop strong relationships with law schools and colleges nationwide. Deputy district attorneys also visited job fairs at local high schools and elementary schools to encourage students to structure their academic plans toward law school.

“Our efforts have clearly demonstrated to students considering a career as a prosecutor that we are

actively seeking them to join us in our work,” District Attorney Lacey said.

As part of this effort, the office reinstituted its paid law clerk program.

The program offered a competitive advantage in recruiting top talent. Many law students cannot afford to volunteer as law clerks and might not seek careers in public service.

“It increases the likelihood that those who represent the people of Los Angeles County will better reflect the diversity of the community we serve,” District Attorney Lacey said.

Ten law clerks were hired in 2019. They were second-year law students or third-year night school law students. Another 10 worked with the office in 2020.

Paid post-bar law clerks also were hired. These clerks included law school graduates who were awaiting admission into the State Bar of California.

Eight were hired as deputy district attorneys in 2020.

## VICTIM SERVICES PROVIDED AFTER MASS SHOOTING AT HIGH SCHOOL

Victim services representatives comforted and assisted students, faculty members and families affected by the Nov. 14, 2019, fatal mass shooting at Saugus High School.

Nine employees of the District Attorney’s Office were on scene in the aftermath of the shooting, in which

two students were killed and three others were injured.

“This was an extraordinary team effort,” said Michele Daniels, director of the Bureau of Victim Services.

“Our staff recently received crisis response training. All of the individuals on hand did their best to assist and

comfort these families and get people the resources they needed,” Daniels added.

One employee was part of a team that notified the parents of the slain students. Another helped coordinate crisis counselors who aided the victims’ families after they left the hospital. A third employee was on hand at the area hospital to assist victims’ families.

Several representatives and one of the office’s facility dogs staffed counseling sessions, a family reunification center, community meetings and vigils.

District Attorney’s Office personnel have been on the scene of other tragedies to assist victims, including mass shootings in Las Vegas and Thousand Oaks.



# PROJECT LEAD REACHES MORE STUDENTS, NEW SCHOOLS



As Project LEAD continued to grow, the office's law-related education program reached two new audiences: a deaf class in Baldwin Hills and a San Fernando Valley school with a high homeless population.

District Attorney Jackie Lacey personally recruited seven deputy district attorneys to work with students at Telfair Elementary School after reading about the Pacoima campus, where more than 20% of its 652 students identified as homeless.

She visited Telfair on June 4, 2019, to meet the fifth-grade students and participate in their Project LEAD graduation ceremony.



"Project LEAD makes a difference in the lives of students and in their communities," said District Attorney Lacey, who taught the curriculum for five years at Lorena Street Elementary School in Boyle Heights.

Project LEAD teaches students about the social and legal consequences of juvenile crimes, such as truancy, illicit drug use, shoplifting and graffiti; techniques for resolving conflicts and resisting peer pressure; tolerance and respect for diversity.

District Attorney Lacey also spent time with Project LEAD students from the Marlton School. She watched and offered encouragement to the deaf students as they performed their mock trial using American Sign Language (ASL) on May 16, 2019.

That school year, the full 20-week Project LEAD curriculum was presented, for the first time, in ASL. Deputy District Attorney Alice Kurs, who taught the class using sign language, was honored in 2019 as the Project LEAD Facilitator of the Year for her unique contribution.






In the 2019-2020 school year, Project LEAD was presented to the greatest number of students since its inception in 1993. Nearly 300 deputy district attorneys and others taught 3,518 students in 117 classrooms in 60 schools about the criminal justice system.

*Clockwise from the top left: A Project LEAD student from the Marlton School takes part in a mock trial in 2019. Deputy District Attorney Robert Grace speaks with students from Castellar Elementary School in 2020. A student from Castellar plays the role of a judge in a mock trial. Deputy District Attorney Kelly Howick addresses mock trial jurors.*





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